

## ***Goals and Policies Statement***

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### **Introduction:**

This element of the City of Warwick Comprehensive Plan identifies the overall goals and policies which shall guide the future growth and development of the city. The Goals and Policies statement consists of a combination those goals and policies contained in Warwick's current comprehensive plan, the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act (as amended), the State Guide Plan as well as current goals and policies developed within the public process resulting from of a series of public meetings hosted by the Warwick Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, created by Mayor Avedisian by means of Executive Order 2005-13, and culminating in the public adoption of the Warwick Comprehensive Plan by the Warwick Planning Board and the Warwick City Council.

The intent of the Goals and Policies Element is to centralize and present the general goals and policies which shape and influence the specific elements of the Warwick Comprehensive Plan and thereby guide the physical, social and economic development of the city. Each plan element (Land Use, Housing, Economic Development, Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation, Services and Facilities, Circulation and Historic Preservation) also contains specific goals and polices which are specific the individual element.

### **Public Participation Process:**

Mayor Avedisian created the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee with the issuance of Executive Order 2005-13. The Advisory Committee, consisting of eleven members with various backgrounds and expertise, includes the following representatives:

Warwick Planning Board Member  
Land Trust Member  
Wildlife and Conservation Commission Member

Warwick Harbor Commission Member  
Historic District Commission Member  
Rhode Island Airport Commission Representative  
Warwick City Council Member  
Warwick Chamber of Commerce Representative  
Mayoral Public Appointment  
City Council Public Appointment  
Planning Director

The Advisory Committee is responsible for working with the planning staff to hold public meetings, gather public input and develop recommendations for amendments, modifications, and changes to be adopted by the Warwick Planning Board and the Warwick City Council for the update of the Warwick Comprehensive Plan.

In addition to the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee meetings, the amended plan elements were available for review and comment by the general public on the City of Warwick web site and copies were made available at select city locations including the Planning Department, the City Clerks Office and the Warwick Public Library.

### **1990 – 1991 Primary Issues:**

During the City of Warwick's original comprehensive planning process in 1990 – 1991 it was determined that the primary issues facing the City included:

- 1) Neighborhood Protection: There is a general feeling that the City's neighborhoods are threatened by overdevelopment and the intrusion of nonresidential activity.
- 2) Suburban Sprawl: The past practices of commercial strip development have lead to traffic congestion and incremental development of aesthetically unattractive commercial strip malls.
- 3) Environmental Protection: A growing environmental awareness among City residents will require better planning for the future and the protection of dwindling open spaces and natural

resources.

Based on public comment presented to the Advisory Committee it appears that neighborhood protection and environmental protection continue to be major issues facing the city, however it is apparent that concern about suburban sprawl has been replaced with concerns about Warwick's continued development and the city's transformation from a suburban to an urban community. As a result, Suburban Sprawl has been replaced by the Urbanization of Suburbia. Therefore the Primary

### **Primary Issues Present:**

1) Urbanization of Suburbia: Many specific issues have been presented as development concerns facing the City today including but not limited to increased traffic, overdevelopment of residential areas, environmental protection, and economic redevelopment of blighted areas, but one central theme is inherent throughout and that theme can be defined as the "Urbanization of Suburbia."

2) Neighborhood Protection: There is a general feeling that the City's neighborhoods are threatened by overdevelopment and the intrusion of nonresidential activity.

3) Environmental Protection: A growing environmental awareness among City residents will require better planning for the future and the protection of dwindling open spaces and natural resources.

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### **Goals General:**

The following goals are presented in the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act Section 45-22.2-3 (C) and are common to every community throughout the State of Rhode Island.

1) To promote orderly growth and development that recognizes the natural characteristics of the land, its suitability for use and the availability of existing and proposed public and/or private

facilities.

2) To promote an economic climate which increases quality job opportunities and overall economic well being of each municipality and the state.

3) To promote a balance of housing choices, for all income levels and age groups, which recognizes the affordability of housing as the responsibility of each municipality and the state.

4) To promote the protection of the natural, historic and cultural resources of each municipality and the state.

5) To promote the preservation of the open space and recreational resources of each municipality and the state.

6) To encourage the use of innovative development regulations and techniques that promote development of land suitable for development while protecting our natural cultural historical and recreational resources and achieving a balanced pattern of land uses.

7) To promote consistency of state actions and programs with municipal comprehensive plans and provide for review procedures to ensure that state goals and policies are reflected in municipal comprehensive plans and state guide plans.

8) To insure adequate uniform data are available to municipal and state government as a basis for comprehensive planning and land use regulation.

9) To ensure that municipal land use regulations and decisions are consistent with the comprehensive plan of the municipality and to insure state land use regulations and decisions are consistent with state guide plans.

10) To encourage the involvement of all citizens in the formulation, review and adoption of the comprehensive plan.

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### **Goals Specific:**

The following goals are specific to the City of Warwick and have been developed through the Comprehensive Plan update process:

1) To sensibly manage the city's progression from a suburban community to a mature developed urban community.

2) To be more judicious in land-use decisions while guiding the planning and development of the City.

3) To enforce the development guidelines of this Comprehensive Plan, the City's Zoning Ordinance and the Development Review Regulations universally and consistently.

4) To manage growth and development so the city's neighborhoods thrive and flourish.

5) To foster business development that is balanced, well integrated and provides a benefit to the community.

## **Goals and Policies by Element**

### **I) Land Use Element**

#### **Residential**

Goal: To manage growth and development so the city's residential neighborhoods thrive and flourish.

Policies:

1) Protect, preserve and enhance residential neighborhoods and environmentally sensitive areas from overdevelopment through enforcement of the City's Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Ordinance and Development Review Regulations.

2) Protect, preserve and enhance residential neighborhoods and environmentally sensitive areas through the promotion of desirable land use practices including preservation of open space, the promotion of cluster developments, open space acquisition and sensitive siting of competing land uses.

3) Foster the establishment of public places (parks) that caters to specific developments/neighborhoods.

4) Prohibit the creation of undersized lots and require mergers of parcels where possible to comply with existing zoning.

5) Prohibit nonresidential uses in residential areas.

6) Consider rezoning underutilized commercial property to residential where appropriate.

1) To foster the establishment of public places (parks) that caters to specific developments/neighborhoods.

Commercial

Goal: To foster commercial development that is balanced well integrated and provides a benefit to the community.

Policies:

1) Promote an urban enclave of mixed-use development related to T.F. Green airport (Warwick Station Redevelopment District).

2) Create village zoning commercial districts in order capitalize on Warwick's community of villages.

3) Break up urban sprawl/strip development by limiting the extent of commercial corridors on minor arterials.

4) New commercial zones should be aimed primarily at the office market rather than retail.

5) New or expanded commercial activity should generally be limited to locations within existing business areas where conflicts with residential or other uses will not occur.

1) Protect, preserve and enhance residential neighborhoods and environmentally sensitive areas through the promotion of desirable land use practices including:.

Preservation of open space through the promotion of cluster developments.

Promotion of open space acquisition and sensitive siting of competing land uses.



Promotion of tree preservation.

Preservation of agricultural uses.

Preservation of public rights of way to the water.

Prohibition of nonresidential uses in residential areas.

Minimize neighborhood impacts by integrating new development into existing transportation networks.

## **Industrial**

Goal: To foster industrial development that is balanced well integrated and provides a benefit to the community.

Policies:

Rezone additional land to General Industrial (GI)

1) New industrial development zones should be contiguous with existing industrial areas wherever possible.

2) New industrial zones may should be used as buffers zones around T.F. Green State Airport.

3) Capitalize on the existence of T.F. Green Airport to expand airport related industrial development.

□ Commercial

1) Create village zoning districts in order capitalize on Warwick's community of villages.

New commercial zones should be aimed primarily at the office market rather than retail.

New or expanded commercial activity should generally be limited to locations within existing business areas where conflicts with residential or other uses will not occur (i.e., Bald Hill Road/Quaker Lane, see future land map).

To separate urban sprawl/strip development by limiting the extent of commercial corridors on minor arterial streets.

## **II) Housing Element**

Goal: Provide a wide range of housing choices for all Warwick residents including the establishment of low and moderate income housing.

Policies:

1) Promote affordable housing strategies for the elderly and single parent families.

2) Promote congregate elderly housing and accessory (in-law) apartments.

3) Promote reverse mortgages and life estates.

4) Expand and publicize the availability of the Home Improvement Program (HIP).

Provide property tax abatements in order to encourage private development of affordable housing.

5) Explore expansion of the Warwick Housing Authority's role in housing production in conjunction with the private sector.

6) Seek legislation instituting financial disincentives for condominium conversion of affordable rental units.

7) Coordinate housing, planning and implementation under the auspices of a housing advocate within the Planning Department.

8) Implement recommendation of the Affordable Housing Task force.

### **III) Economic Development Element**

Goal: To foster business development that is balanced, well integrated and provides a benefit to the community.

Policies:

- 1) Promote an urban enclave of mixed-use development related to T.F. Green airport (Warwick Station Redevelopment District.)
- 2) Capitalize on the existence of T.F. Green Airport to expand airport related industrial development.
- 3) New industrial zones may should be used as buffers zones around T.F. Green State Airport.
- 4) Create village zoning districts in order capitalize on Warwick's community of villages.
- 5) Foster business (areas/districts) which cater to the needs of residential neighborhoods.
- 6) Promote businesses that will provide a service to the community.
- 7) Limit overdevelopment/repetition of commercial uses.

## **Commercial**

- 1) Create village zoning districts in order capitalize on Warwick's community of villages.

New commercial zones should be aimed primarily at the office market rather than retail.

New or expanded commercial activity should generally be limited to locations within existing business areas where conflicts with residential or other uses will not occur (i.e., Bald Hill Road/Quaker Lane, see future land map).

To separate urban sprawl/strip development by limiting the extent of commercial corridors on minor arterial streets.

8) New commercial zones should be aimed primarily at the office market rather than retail.

9) New or expanded commercial activity should generally be limited to locations within existing business areas where conflicts with residential or other uses will not occur.

10) Capitalize on Warwick's reputation as Rhode Island's "Hospitality Center."

11) Examine the feasibility of developing coastal related economic resources.

12) Work with the State of Rhode Island Department of Transportation to improve vehicular access (particularly commercial truck access) to Warwick business centers (ie. Metro Center Industrial Park, Jefferson Boulevard, Warwick Station Redevelopment District etc.)

13) Continue to expand/upgrade public utilities including but not limited to public water, sewer, fiber-optics/telecommunications etc. to insure business location, retention and expansion.

14) Work with Warwick's educational community to provide job training programs and curriculum orientated towards current trends in business development.

#### **IV) Open Space, Recreation and Natural Resources Element**

##### **Open Space and Natural Resources**

Goal: To protect, preserve and enhance environmentally sensitive areas, agricultural land and natural resources through the promotion of desirable land use practices.

Policies:

1) Implement an open space protection and acquisition program that utilizes the full spectrum of acquisition techniques including but not limited to outright acquisition of land, acquisition of development rights and/or conservation easements, foreclosing rights of redemption and open space land dedication within the development review process.

2) Protect, preserve and enhance environmentally sensitive areas through desirable land use practices including preservation of open space through the promotion of cluster developments, open space acquisition and sensitive siting of competing land uses.

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3) To identify and prioritize specific parcels of land for acquisition, development rights conservation easements for farmland preservation, open space and active recreation purposes that have the greatest potential for preserving the City's natural resources.

Goal: Protect and preserve coastal and freshwater wetlands water quality.

Policies:

1) Protect freshwater bodies, coastal waters, areas with soil limitations, unique natural features, fish and wildlife habitat, and threatened and endangered species habitat through land use planning and regulatory management programs.

2) Develop a storm-water management plan and ordinance to mitigate negative impacts and improve the City's infrastructure and development regulations.

3) Foster the acquisition of buffer areas around significant wetlands areas.

4) Encourage and/or require homeowners to tie into existing sewer lines and consider incentives loans to defray costs.

5) Empower the Warwick Land Trust to raise revenue apply for grant funding in order to finance open space protection initiatives.

Goal: To protect, preserve and maintain freshwater and saltwater shore public access points.

Policies:

1) To prepare and maintain an active inventory of all public right of ways to the coastline, freshwater ponds and rivers.

2) To demarcate and maintain wherever feasible and practical public rights of way identified in the inventory.

3) To identify, retain and foreclose rights of redemption on all tax title properties within 200 feet of the shoreline and all inland water bodies that provide potential access points and scenic vistas to the shore, fresh water ponds and rivers.

Goal: Maintain high standards of urban design and aesthetics in public open spaces to preserve the character of the City.

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Policies:

1) To develop and manage a municipal tree farm and maintain a street tree planting program.

2) Encourage private beautification efforts (adopt a spot programs) including neighborhood groups and business to plant flowers and other landscaping to enhance public and private open spaces.

## Recreation

Goal: Promote, maintain and enhance a broad range of city-wide and neighborhood recreational facilities which meet the needs and desires of Warwick's residents.

### Policies:

1) Foster the establishment of public places (parks, tot lots, playgrounds, etc.) that caters to specific developments/neighborhoods.

2) Encourage neighborhood associations to adopt, develop and maintain neighborhood recreational facilities and open spaces.

3) Focus on the maintenance and enhancement of the Mickey Stevens Athletic Complex.

4) Design single-purpose fields/facilities that are sensitive to maintenance scheduling and operational procedures.

5) Promote handicap accessibility to Warwick's public recreation facilities.

6) Develop a recreational facility maintenance manual that provides an annual maintenance program for all recreational facilities.



Goal:

Preserve and maintain freshwater and saltwater public access points.

Develop bicycle/pedestrian linkages and/or "green corridors" between existing open space and recreation nodes.

Policies:

1) Demarcate bicycle paths linking the various open spaces and recreation facilities in the City.

## **V) Services and Facilities Element**

Goal: To provide the city's residential and business communities with adequate services and facilities designed to meet all current and future needs.

### **Sewerage Disposal**

Goal: Provide environmentally friendly, safe and efficient sewerage disposal systems and programs.

Policies:

1) Continue implementation of the sewer facilities plan for the upgrading of the sewer treatment plan and expansion of the City's sewer system.

2) Require state of the art wastewater treatment and disposal alternatives for areas without sewers, particularly environmentally sensitive (wetlands/coastal) areas.

- 3) Require mandatory sewer connections particularly in environmentally sensitive (wetlands/coastal) areas.
- 4) Maintain and expand as necessary the industrial pretreatment program to include commercial and industrial establishments with the potential to discharge materials that can disrupt the treatment facility and /or cause the facility to exceed the limits of its wastewater discharge permit.
- 5) Develop a homeowner educational program designed to discourage disposal of harmful materials into on-site sewerages disposal systems and the municipal sewer system.

## **Water Service**

Goal: Provide a plentiful supply of clean drinking water to meet current and future service requirements for the City's residential and business communities.

### **Policies:**

- 1) Develop a policy program and eliminate dead end mains and pressure drops.
- 2) Promote and encourage water conservation efforts.
- 3) Protect the Hunt River aquifer from potential contamination.
- 4) Encourage the Kent County Water Authority to prepare a capital improvement program in order to implement necessary water delivery system improvements to meet current and future demand.

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## **Storm-water Management**

Goal: To provide adequate, efficient and environmentally friendly safe means of accommodating storm-water runoff.

Policies:

- 1) To adopt and implement a City wide storm-water management plan that meets/exceeds the federally mandated phase II storm-water standards.
- 2) Require on site storm-water management for all new and expanding development.
- 3) Retrofit older drainage systems to improve water quality.
- 4) Require reporting and enforce maintenance of privately owned drainage systems.

## **Police Department, Fire and Rescue Services**

Goal: Provide the necessary manpower, services, facilities and equipment which meet/exceed accepted standards and provide protection for the City's residential and business communities.

Policies:

- 1) Review proposed new development to determine the effect on manpower, service areas, facilities and equipment to insure adequate protection.

2) Ensure adequate emergency response times for police, fire and rescue.

3) To formally adopt, implement and periodically review and update the City's "Hazard Mitigation Strategy."

## **School System**

Goal: Provide a high quality educational system and facilities that meets current and future educational needs.

Policies:

1) Review proposed new development to determine the effect on school districts and facilities in order to provide adequate services and facilities.

2) Review residential development trends and school age population shifts to determine the need for redistricting.

3) Analyze, determine and implement the most economically efficient means of continuing to provide a high quality educational system and facilities.

4) Shift focus from facilities expansion to more efficient utilization of existing facilities.

## **VI) Circulation Element**

Goal: To provide the City of Warwick with a balanced transportation system that meets the needs of its citizens by developing a related network of local roads, state roadways and highways, public transportation, rail service, parking, pedestrian walkways and bicycle travel ways in response to the desired and planned patterns of future land use.

### **Roads and Highways**

Policies:

- 1) Minimize traffic impact by efficiently integrating new development into existing transportation networks.
- 2) Where possible interconnect new residential development with existing neighborhoods to provide multiple access points in order improve public safety and relieve traffic congestion on the City's collector roadways and arterials.
- 3) Where possible all new subdivisions and land development projects should provide two access points in order to relieve traffic congestion on local streets and to improve public safety.
- 4) Develop the Route 37 extension to alleviate congestion and to provide improved east west circulation.
- 5) Carefully monitor and limit multiple access points on the City's major arterial roadways.
- 6) Prepare an Urban Forestry Plan and Program for street tree planting in order to improve the environment and aesthetics.
- 7) Develop a city wide sidewalk improvement program and require sidewalks in all new

residential developments.

8) Consider pedestrian movement, bicycle transportation and streetscape aesthetics in new and improved roadway design.

9) Preserve Warwick's historic character, man made and natural landscape when designing roadway construction.

## **Warwick Station**

Policies:

1) Develop an inter-modal facility within the Warwick Station Redevelopment District which includes hi-speed and commuter rail station and parking facility with a direct connection to T. F. Green Airport.

2) Encourage the development of alternative modes of transportation for trips less than 200 miles in distance, such as high speed rail and the improvement of the Boston to New York Rail Corridor to reduce rail travel time to New York.

3) Encourage and work with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to study the feasibility of establishing commuter rail transit stops at Forge Road and Green State Airport.

## **T.F. Green Airport**

Policies:

- 1) Develop a direct connection between T. F. Green Airport and the Warwick Station inter-modal facility.
- 2) Work with the State of Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC), and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to mitigate any potential negative impacts of the airport on the City of Warwick.
- 3) Support noise abatement programs and land use measures including but not limited to selective rezoning, establishment of buffer areas and institution environmental best management practices (BMP's) intended to reduce airport impacts.
- 4) Discourage proposals to expand airport runways beyond the current airport fence line.

## **VII) Historic Preservation Element**

Goal: To protect and preserve the City's finite historical resources.

Policies:

- 1) Establish a standardized historic properties computer base.
- 2) Expand historic district zoning to consider more single site zoning.
- 3) Promote educational efforts in the schools and engender a preservation ethic among Warwick residents.

4) Advocate the preservation of historical cemeteries through the continued efforts of the Warwick Historical Cemetery commission.

5) Work with the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission (RIHPC) to develop procedures to protect hidden archaeological resources.

6) Establish a program to accept and acquire historic easements.

7) Develop a preservation program for the City's archives.